

sen hastened to the place and commenced his labors.

The importance to science of the observations possible in this high altitude servatt be overestimated. M. Jansen has devoted much of his life to the study of the spectra of gases and vapors forming the atmosphere of the earth. This he has done with a view of learning something definite about the atmospheres of other bodies in our solar system. He soon discovered that the solar spectrum exhibits the lines and bands peculiar to oxygen, and the conclusion would seem warranted that the atmosphere of the heavenly luminary contains gases similar to those of the earth. But did those lines originate from anything in the sun or were they merely a reflex of the earth's atmosphere? This question could be solved only by observations from various heights. After an experiment in 1888, ten thousand feet above the sea, Jansen announced that the lines referred to were due entirely to the oxygen of the earth's atmosphere. From the top of the highest mountain in Europe the astronomer will continue his studies. The question is to determine whether the other planets are habitable or not. In the atmosphere of Mars vapor has been discovered by means of the spectral analysis. The seas are therefore thought to be real oceans and the polar caps, snow and ice. On Saturn, too, vapor has been detected, and perhaps on Venus. M. Jansen, speaking of these discoveries and their importance in the further advance of our knowledge about the worlds around us, is quoted as follows:

When these investigations are finished; when science shall have determined rigorously the astronomic conditions in which each planet is placed; when she shall have fixed the geological period, the chemical constitution of the star, the nature of the gases which form its atmosphere and that of the fluids which compose its oceans, then she will be able to say with certainty if the planets are habitable and what is the nature of the life they can support, for these are the points which determine the question. It is a fine problem that we are on the point of solving; perhaps the highest that human intelligence has ever proposed.

#### PREACHERS' PECULIARITIES.

Recently a number of our correspondents have treated the readers of the News to a number of suggestions for the benefit and guidance of preachers. Some of these hints have been quite pertinent and worthy of being adopted. Some particular habitual peculiarities are injurious to both preacher and congregation. A common one is for the speaker to make the introductory announcement that he is dreadfully scared. It is bad enough to be in such a condition, but the situation is made still worse by making a statement of its existence, for the following reasons: The information is not edifying; it creates a feeling of discomfort in the minds of the congregation, who, in their commiseration for the speaker are liable to have their thoughts diverted from his discourse. Sensitive people are sometimes seized with apprehension lest the scare should result in a collapse. The sympathy and mental activity of the assemblage ought to be centered upon

the thoughts of the discourse rather than upon the person who expresses them. Neither is it conducive to the growth of intelligence and edification for the preacher to preface his remarks with a statement to the effect that he has nothing to say. This announcement is unprofitable, because unnecessary. If the alleged blank mental condition of the preacher be correct, the audience will make the discovery before he proceeds any great distance with his discourse. Should his mind, after all, prove to be prolific, it will be clear to the auditors that the statement was not only superfluous but inaccurate. This will naturally affect the estimate of the speaker's reliability.

#### A LONE VOYAGER.

The passing through this city, en route to the Midwinter Fair from Chicago, of a canvas covered folding boat, is suggestive of some of the exploits of its owner and builder, Wm. A. Andrews, of Boston. The boat is only fourteen feet long, and its fame is recorded in the legend attached to it while on exhibition at the World's Fair—"The smallest boat that ever carried a passenger across the Atlantic." On the 28th of July, 1892, Captain Andrews started from Atlantic City, New Jersey, as the sole occupant of this little craft, and on September 8th of that year landed at Lisbon, Portugal. He afterwards attended the Spanish celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus.

Captain Andrews began his sea going exploits in 1878. Previous to that time he had been a carpenter, then a worker in a piano factory. His first boat was the Nautilus, in which he made the trip from Boston to Havre, going in forty-five days. His vessel was nineteen feet long. Ten years later, in 1888, he made the voyage from Boston to Queenstown in a dory, the Dark Secret. This boat was but fifteen feet long, and was sixty-one days on the voyage. The third transatlantic voyage was on the Mermaid, fifteen feet long, from Boston to Antwerp, in fifty-seven days. On each of these trips the lone voyager experienced considerable hardships from storms. His fourth and last voyage thus far was the most pleasant of any.

The venturesome Bostonian is now preparing for another ocean journey almost twice as long as any he has yet essayed. He proposes to go from San Francisco to Yokohama in the little craft which has just been shipped west. At first he thought of making the trip from Liverpool, but finally concluded it would be better to venture from the Golden Gate, as the distance would be less and he would be more in the way of ocean steamers, to be picked up in case of a mishap.

Of course there are a good many people who look upon Captain Andrews as a crank in his venturesome expedition; and most people of sense will at least consider him egregiously foolhardy. But there is a financial side to his eccentric proceedings, senseless and useless as they may appear. By means of his exploits he not only acquires considerable fame, but finds

in this form of recklessness a much more profitable employment than his old business of wood-working. He is now the recipient of considerable sums from various sources because of the prominence into which he has been brought; and as he is of an economical turn of mind he has netted already, it is said, a snug little sum, which requires but a small increase to enable him to spend the remainder of his days in comfortable retirement with his family. He is now fifty years of age and robust in health. He expects to sail for Yokohama early in the summer. And while we cannot say he deserves a safe and prosperous journey, we still hope he may have it.

#### THE SIBERIAN RAILROAD.

The Siberian railroad is nearing its completion and many people are already directing their attention towards the fertile land which this road will make accessible to the world. Word comes from St. Petersburg that it is the intention of the Russian government to open for settlement a belt of land along the six thousand miles' long road, several miles wide on each side. To desirable settlers the land will practically be a free gift. The importance of this movement may be understood when it is considered that a territory as large as Germany, Austria, Holland, Belgium and Denmark, with favorable climate and exceedingly fertile soil, will thereby be thrown open to the surplus population of the world. At present all industrial products are sold at a high price in Siberia, and it is therefore natural that a lively commerce will be one of the first results of the completion of the great project. The country has an abundance of mines containing iron, gold, coal, salt, etc., which only need more labor for development to yield enough to enrich the nation. With all these possibilities it is not unlikely that the opening up of the Siberian railroad will relieve our statesmen from the difficult task of solving the immigration problem, by diverting a greater part of the current of home seekers to the vast country in Asia which has hitherto been almost a *terra incognita*. It is also stated that by the aid of this road a traveler will be able to trot around the earth in forty-five days.

THE SITUATION in Florida has resolved itself into this decisive condition: The Duval club says the fight will occur as advertised on Jan. 25; Governor Mitchell says it will not. What more can anybody ask?

GEN. ALGER's boast, that he "began life as a harefooted boy," moves a flip-pant Michigan paper to say that "so did all of us." This in turn admits of the amendment: what about those "of us" who are girls?

AFTER READING that the Bell telephone has paid more than twenty-three million dollars in dividends in the past twelve years, it would be a bold old fossil who could still insist that talk is cheap.

CONGRESS COSTS the United States government \$8,000 per day. It isn't worth the money, at least in hard times like these.